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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Terry Goddard to Present Distinguished Service Awards to Victims' Rights Advocates

(Phoenix, Ariz. – April 8, 2005 [revised May 3, 2005]) Arizona Attorney General Terry Goddard will present Monday the Attorney General's Distinguished Service Awards to victims' rights advocates at the Victims' Rights Week Kick-Off Event held on the State Senate Lawn.

These awards will be presented in recognition of uncommon commitment, exemplary service, and contribution to and protecting victims' rights to justice and due process, and to improving the treatment of crime victims.

Attorney General's Distinguished Award for Leadership will be presented to Kym Pasqualini, National Center for Missing Adults, a division of Nation's Missing Children Organization.

In 1994, Pasqualini founded the Nation's Missing Children Organization in Phoenix. She expanded the organization's charter in 1995 to accept cases of those over the age of 18. She recognized that missing adults and their families were a segment of the victim population that had not yet been recognized as victims and were underserved.

In 1996, she set out to gain the assistance of Congress by introducing legislation to establish the first national clearinghouse for missing adults. In June 2002 Pasqualini was awarded a grant to establish the National Center for Missing Adults.

Attorney General's Distinguished Award for Public Policy will be presented to Deborah Tredway of the Arizona Coalition Against Domestic Violence for her determination to change the penalty in spousal rape cases in Arizona.

Rape is rape. Yet in Arizona, there are different penalties for sexual assault and sexual assault on a spouse. Concerned that the penalty for a first offense is equal to a misdemeanor, Deborah Tredway decided to take her concerns to the Arizona State Legislature in 2004.

Working with the Arizona Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Tredway became an accomplished citizen lobbyist. This year SB 1040 is making its way through the legislature and is ready to be voted on by the State House of Representatives.

Attorney General's Distinguished Award for Service Coordination will be presented to Mesa Police Department Detective Coy Johnston and Domestic Violence Specialist Andrea Sierra from the Domestic Violence Enforcement Response Team (DVERT).

Detective Johnson and Ms. Sierra strive to quickly arrest domestic violence offenders as well as work with the victims of domestic violence to educate them on the cycle of violence. What makes their collaboration unique is that one is a sworn officer and the other is a civilian victim specialist. This combination brings different perspectives to the solutions of problems.

Their accomplishments include helping to organize the "31 Days of October", a statewide DV awareness campaign (which was recognized by the Governor) and helping to establish a statewide warrant roundup coinciding with DV awareness month.

The Attorney General's Distinguished Award for Advocacy Direct Services will be presented to Terri Woodmansee, Crisis Services Coordinator for the Goodyear Police Department. Ms. Woodmansee was hired as a 911 operator in 1999, and through her job realized that more could be done to help crime victims in Goodyear. She researched various programs over three years and applied for grant funding to open a Crisis Services Unit for the City of Goodyear.

Ms. Woodmansee set up the unit, working part-time on victims' services while continuing to work as a 911 operator fulltime. Ms. Woodmansee recruited volunteers, and now heads up a program that operates 24 hours, 7-days a week. Since the unit started, the City of Goodyear has provided services to more than 800 victims and is currently working on 381 open cases.

The Attorney General's Distinguished Award for Advocacy Direct Services will be presented to the Phoenix Fire Department's Community Assistance Program. The Community Assistance Program began delivering crisis intervention and victims' assistance services on scene in 1998. The program is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to respond to police or fire requests. It is a primarily volunteer-based program with over 28,000 hours donated in 2004. The program provides services such as explaining investigative and judicial processes, explaining victims' rights and compensation, providing transportation and emergency financial assistance, and delivering death notifications.

Attorney General's Distinguished Award for Innovative Practices will be presented to Childhelp USA for its Mobile Center of Northern Arizona. Childhelp USA has made itself a frontrunner in the race to eliminate child abuse and to provide the best possible services to victims.

Childhelp chose to adapt the advocacy center model, which has been highly effective in the investigation of child abuse by housing in different investigative agencies one location. Childhelp USA took this concept to the next level with the Childhelp USA Mobile Center of Northern Arizona. Childhelp saw a gap in the rural areas where the closest investigative services are four to six hours away, and developed a solution.

Childhelp partners with local law enforcement agencies throughout Northern Arizona and provides the mobile center with comprehensive, professional services and state-of-the-art telemedicine for the investigation, treatment and prevention of child abuse. The mobile center provides a child-friendly traveling location where interviews and medical examinations are conducted and used for evidence in successful prosecution of child abusers.

Earlier this month, the founders of Childhelp USA were nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of their work to end child abuse.

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